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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/939,703	08/28/2001	Koji Takahashi	Q63861	4454
7590	07/29/2004		EXAMINER	
SUGHRUE, MION, ZINN, MACPEAK & SEAS, PLLC 2100 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Washington, DC 20037-3213			BAYAT, ALI	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2625	
			DATE MAILED: 07/29/2004	

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/939,703	TAKAHASHI, KOJI
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Ali Bayat	2625

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
- 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-14 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) 11-14 is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1,2 and 9 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) 3-8 and 10 is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 28 August 2001 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1-2 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Ikeda (US Pub. No. 2002/0018129 A1).

In regard to claim 1, Ikeda provides for a method of correcting white balance (Fig.1 element 12, paragraph 51 lines 21-24) comprising the step of: Estimating, by using at least gray and/ or skin color information contained in an input color image (paragraph 51 lines 37-41), a color temperature of a photographing light source with which a color image has been formed (paragraph 51 lines 21-41); and correcting an image signal of the color image based on the estimated color temperature (paragraph 51 lines 21-41).

With regard to claim 2, Ikeda provides for a method, wherein only said gray (paragraph 51, lines 1-5, note adjusting gains of R, B image data of the color image data, which corresponds to gray) and skin color information is used (paragraph 51 lines 37-41).

As to claim 9. See claim 1 above. It recites similar limitations as claim 1. Hence it is similarly analyzed and rejected.

Allowable Subject Matter

2. Claims 11-14 are allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: the prior art of Ikeda provide for estimating, by using at least gray and / or skin color information contained in an input color image, a color temperature of a photographing light source with which a color image has been formed; and correcting an image signal of the color image based on the estimated color temperature, as cited in claims 1 and 9. **However the prior art Ikeda failed to teach or suggest for a method of correcting density, comprising the steps of: multiplying image signals of each pixel in an input color image by set coefficients to detect pixels having the multiplied image signals in the vicinity of a blackbody locus curve of skin color as skin color candidate pixels; and assigning an average obtained for predetermined color signal from said skin color candidate pixels detected to a predetermined density of a color corresponding to said color signal on a print.**

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Objected Claims

3. Claims 3-8 and 10 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Other Cited References

4. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

US patent 6,160,579 to Shiraiwa et al. is cited for image processing apparatus and method.

US patent 5,420,630 to Takei is cited for image pickup apparatus performing white balance control based on data from regions of a frame.

US patent 5,351,079 to Usui is cited for color balance adjusting apparatus using a decorrelating neural network.

US patent 6,559,826 to Mendelson et al. is cited for method for modeling and updating a colorimetric reference profile for flat panel display.

Contact Information

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ali Bayat whose telephone number is 703-306-5915. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Thur 9:00-7:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Bhavesh Mehta can be reached on 703-3085246. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Ali Bayat 
Patent examiner
Group Art Unit 2625
7/26/04



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